

**SUMMARY OF THE
NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
APRIL 25, 2003**

The Board of Directors of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on April 25, 2003, at 11:00 p.m. Eastern Time. In the absence of the Chair, Ms. Lara Autry, NELAC/NELAP Director, led the meeting. The agenda for this meeting is shown in Attachment A, new action items are shown in Attachment B, incomplete action items from past meetings are shown in Attachment C, and a list of participants is shown in Attachment D.

AGENDA ITEMS

Finalize Memorandum

Ms. Autry reported that Dr. Kimsey has finalized and sent the memo to Dr. Gilman from the Board.

Follow-up to Spring Strategic Planning Meeting

Ms. Autry reported that the INELA Board of Directors had a good meeting on April 21, 2003, to follow-up discussions initiated during the Austin caucus of April 2-3, 2003. Ms. Autry noted the importance of making the distinction between the Institute for Environmental Laboratory Accreditation (INELA) and NELAC, very clear. NELAC desires to work with any acceptable standards' development organization, not just INELA. She also noted that the Ninth NELAC Annual Meeting (NELAC 9), scheduled for June 3-6, 2003 in San Diego, CA, immediately following the separate INELA Semi-Annual meeting on June 1-3, 2003 is logically separate in all ways. She also noted that she is working to clarify and properly arrange NELAC/NELAP matters with respect to these and related issues.

PT Provider Oversight Issues

Mr. Ed Glick from EPA's Office of Water (OW) reported that OW has received no response to their letter of March 26, 2003, to Dr. Willie May of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), asking for a statement of NIST's long-term intentions regarding the NELAC proficiency testing (PT). He said that NIST staff noted extraordinary recent staffing difficulties and expect a response to be forthcoming in the next few days.

NIST's current role, limited to drinking water and wastewater samples, was discussed, noting that the proposal by A2LA encompasses all PT samples of interest to NELAC. Also discussed was the essential activities of an oversight body in ensuring that PT providers maintain their competence. The economic issue of more than one oversight body was noted.

Initial Proficiency Testing Board

Ms. Autry reviewed possible candidates for the PT Board membership with this Board, noting that preliminary contacts with each have been positive, pending their management's response. Draft specification for this board, suitable for incorporation into a chapter of the NELAC Standard, is shown in Attachment E. On the consensus of the Board, Ms. Autry will officially approach these individuals.

Letter to NIST/NVLAP PT Providers

Ms. Autry reported that she drafted and sent the letter (see Attachment F) to NIST accredited PT providers. She has not received feedback at this time.

Actions Required for Renewal of NELAP Recognition of Existing Accrediting Authorities

Ms. Autry reported a positive response from the Accrediting Authority Review Board (AARB) to the proposal to extend the deadline for renewal of NELAP recognition of all accrediting authorities to accommodate the NELAC reorganization. This issue is increasingly serious, considering the increasing difficulty of obtaining travel funds necessary for performance of the mandatory on-site assessments. In response to a question, it was the consensus of Board members that all stakeholder responses have been favorable to an emergency extension.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for May 8, 2003, at 1:30 p.m. by teleconference.

DRAFT AGENDA
April 25, 2003
1:30 - 3:30 PM EST

AGENDA:

- Paul has finalized the memo to Paul Gilman and sent it out
- We had a very positive meeting on Monday as follow-up to Austin and this can be discussed further as necessary.
- The revision to the Proficiency Testing Board Structure, as discussed, is below.
- Initial Proficiency Testing Board Membership
- Attached is the revised letter that I sent to the PT Providers on Tuesday with one week for any feedback regarding A2LA.
- Actions required for re-accreditation of existing AA's
- Other issues
- Next Meeting

**NEW ACTION ITEMS
NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS/CHAIRS
APRIL 25, 2003**

Item No.	Action	Status
1	Ms. Autry will officially approach candidates for the Proficiency Testing Board	ASAP

**UNFINISHED ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS
NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS
APRIL 25, 2003**

Item No.	MEETING DATE	ACTION	STATUS
15	11/14/02	The Board (Dr. Kimsey) will draft a letter to EPA reiterating their consensus of the role of EPA in NELAC, based on discussions during NELAC 8i.	Ongoing
20	12/2/02	Silky will explore the possibility of an OEI database that could serve the function of the NELAC database.	ASAP
9	4/10/03	Ms. Autry will make edits proposed to memo from Dr. Kimsey to Dr. Gilman and send to Board members for their review.	Complete
10	4/10/03	Ms. Autry will try to get rationale for omissions of small changes to Chapter 5, Quality Systems.	Ongoing
11	4/10/03	Committee members should submit suggestions for members of a Proficiency Testing Board to Ms. Autry.	Complete
12	4/10/03	Ms. Autry will make edits proposed by Board members to memo to be sent to NIST/NVLAP recognized proficiency testing providers.	Complete

Note: items that were noted as "Complete" in previous minutes have been deleted from this list.

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND CHAIRS MEETING
APRIL 25, 2003**

Name	Affiliation	Address
Dr. Paul Kimsey Chair (absent)	CA Department of Health Services	T: (510)307-8419 F: (510)412-5848 E: pkimsey@dhs.ca.gov
Mr. R. Wayne Davis Chair-Elect (absent)	SC/DHEC Office of Environmental Lab Certification	T: (803)896-0972 F: (803)896-0850 E: davisrw@dhec.sc.gov
Ms. Silky Labie Past-Chair	FL Dept. of Environmental Protection	T: (850)488-2796 F: (850)922-4614 E: silky.labie@dep.state.fl.us
Ms. Lara Autry Director	USEPA	T: (919)541-5544 F: (919)541-4261 E: autry.lara@epa.gov
Mr. John Duncan Acting Executive Secretary	USEPA	T: (919)541-2187 F: (919)541-2357 E: duncan.john@epa.gov
Ms. Ann Marie Allen	MA Dept. of Environmental Protection	T: (978)682-5237 F: (978)688-0352 E: ann.marie.allen@state.ma.us
Mr. Thomas Maloney	USGS National Water Quality Laboratory	T: (303)236-3460 F: (303)236-3499 E: tmaloney@usgs.gov
Mr. Richard Sheibley	PA Department of Environmental Protection	T: (717)705-2425 F: (717)783-1502 E: rsheibley@state.pa.us
Mr. Joe Slayton	USEPA/Region 3	T: (410)305-2653 F: (410)305-3095 E: slayton.joe@epa.gov
Mr. Gleason Wheatley	KY/Dept. of Environmental Services	T: (502)564-6120 F: (502)564-8930 E: gleason.wheatley@mail.state.ky.us
Ms. Aurora Shields	KS Dept. of Health and Environment	T: (785)296-6198 F: (785)296-8068 E: ashields@kdhe.state.ks.us
Mr. Edward Glick (invited)	EPA/OW	T: (513) 569-7939 F: (513) 569-7191 E: glick.ed@epa.gov
Dr. Gene Tatsch (Contractor Support)	RTI	T: (919) 541-6930 F: (828) 628-0659 E: cet@rti.org

X.X.X The Proficiency Testing Board

The Proficiency Testing Board (PTB) shall be an independent body composed of five voting members. Each member shall be appointed for a five-year term.

- a) The five members shall consist of one federal official and four state officials, of which at least three must be from NELAP-recognized state accrediting authorities. The appointments must be made in such a manner that the correct mix of membership is maintained at all times.
- b) Appointments to the PTB are made by the NELAP Director after consultation with the NELAC Board of Directors.
- c) The PTB annually selects one of its members to serve as its chair.
- d) The PTB has responsibilities to:
 - 1) monitor the proficiency testing provider accreditor (PTPA) to assure they are following the NELAC standards;
 - 2) recommend PT providers;
 - 3) serve as a review board for complaints and providing advice to the NELAP Director, who will make the final decision, on issues raised;
 - 4) facilitate an annual PT caucus;
 - 5) collect PT data for purposes of determining the appropriateness of quality control limits;
 - 6) an annual report on the PT Board activities and PT program in general shall be presented to the NELAC Board of Directors at each annual meeting in the form of a presentation and written report; and
 - 7) the annual written report shall be posted on the NELAC web site.

SUBJECT: Additional Proficiency Testing Oversight Body

TO: NIST/NVLAP Recognized Proficiency Testing Providers

FROM: NELAC Board of Directors

As you are aware of, Section 2.3.1 of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) Standards describes the accreditation requirements that an organization supplying Proficiency Testing (PT) standards to the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) accredited laboratories must meet. The Section states, "For all compounds/matrices for which NIST National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP) accreditation is available, the PT Provider must be accredited by NIST NVLAP." The Section goes on, "For all other programs and compounds for which NIST/NVLAP accreditation is not available, a provider of PT samples for NELAC accreditation must be accredited by a Proficiency Testing Oversight Body (PTOB)/PTPA that meets the NELAC PTOB/PTPA requirements contained in this Chapter and associated appendices."

As a PT Provider approved by NIST NVLAP, your thoughts regarding the expansion of the oversight role to accommodate more analytes of concern is of value to the NELAC Board of Directors (the Board). The Board has been asked by the NELAP recognized Accrediting Authorities to accept the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA) for this role. This would not exclude other oversight bodies from being considered in the future, but would significantly increase the breadth for which providers would be accredited.

The Board would be appreciative to each of you interested if you would respond with any thoughts and concerns you might have regarding this expansion in writing. In order for this input to be taken into account, we will need to receive these thoughts by COB Tuesday, April 29, 2003. The entire Board has been cc'ed on this request to best facilitate the distribution of your response. If you have any questions that you wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to call the NELAP Director, Lara Autry whose contact information appears below.

Thank you for your time in considering and responding to this request.